

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program and City of Santa Cruz Partnering to Develop the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center

Background

The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), an agency of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the City of Santa Cruz ("City") are partnering to design and construct the *Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center*.



Architect's Rendering of Exploration Center

The Exploration Center will function as the largest sanctuary's visitor center and will provide approximately 350,000 people per year with a unique hands-on introduction to the diverse ecosystems of California's Central Coast and will encourage stewardship of the sea and shoreline. The Center is to be located just steps from the ocean in Santa Cruz's famed Beach Area, home to the world famous Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, world class surfing at Steamers Lane, and Lighthouse Point, offering exceptional views of the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary. The site was chosen after the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) studied 23 locations along California's Central Coast, settling on the City's 3/4 acre "Fun Spot" property. The Santa Cruz Beach Area is visited by an estimated 3.5 million people per year.

Planning for the Exploration Center is well underway. The City of Santa Cruz is currently reviewing proposals for architectural services with the intent to select a firm in August of 2004, with a completed design scheduled for January of 2005. The MBNMS is currently soliciting proposals for interpretive development, through the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF), and intends to select a firm by early September of 2004.

Project Details

The Exploration Center will be composed of the following:

- © An architecturally distinct 2 to 3 story building overlooking the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, the West Coast's longest and deepest wooden municipal pier.
- © A multi-modal transportation center, including on-site parking, a rail stop, bicycle facilities and pedestrian connections to the City's newly constructed central park.
- © Dynamic interactive exhibitry highlighting the Monterey Bay's natural resources.
- © Multimedia displays including real-time video of the deepwater ocean environments.
- © Educational classroom and lab facilities.

Partnership

The City of Santa Cruz will serve as the Project Manager for the design and construction of the Center through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with NOAA. The City will construct the Center and will lease it to NMSP through a long term Capital Lease Agreement. The City will Finance construction costs through lease payments, while NMSP will fund architectural design and environmental review with pre-existing monies earmarked specifically for the project. NMSP and the NMSF are managing the design and installation of the interpretive elements of the project. All parties are working collaboratively on all other aspects of the project including fundraising and community and public relations.

Project Costs

Project Components	Cost	Funding Source
Project Management	In-Kind	City of Santa Cruz
Land	\$1.0 million	City of Santa Cruz
Construction & Site Improvements	\$4.6 million	PAC Request
Planning & Design & Other Costs	\$900,000	PAC Request
Exhibitry	\$2.0 million	Private Fundraising
Total Project Costs	\$8.5 million	

Time Frame

The following time frame has been established for proceeding with the project (assuming adequate levels of funding are in place):

June 2004	Execute MOA between parties
August 2004	Retain architect
August 2004 to January 2005	Design project
February 2005	Bid project
June 2005	Begin construction
April 2006	Complete construction
December 2006	Project complete